



Hart Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2016 – 2032

**Council Response to
Inspector's Matters and Issues for
Examination**

**Matter 9
Economic Development**

25 October 2018

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Introduction

This statement sets out the Council's response to the Inspector's Matters 9.1. to 9.14. regarding employment.

All the documents referred to in this statement use examination document reference numbers for convenience.

9.1 Has the need for employment land in both quantitative and qualitative terms been robustly assessed in the Employment Land Review, 2016?

- 9.1.1 The NPPF, paragraph 161, requires local authorities to use evidence to assess the existing and future supply of land available for economic development and its sufficiency and suitability to meet the identified needs. The Employment Land Review Update, jointly commissioned with Rushmoor and Surrey Heath councils, (ECO2a) considers the employment land needs of the Functional Economic Area (FEA) comprised by the three authorities. This was prepared in accordance with the methodology set out in PPG and considers future employment needs based on employment labour demand; employment land supply; and past take up trends.
- 9.1.2 The ELR was part of a combined study also involving an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the same three authorities (HOU1a). The Hart economic context for the study was set by the Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan (ECO6) and the Hart Economic Development Strategy (ECO4a).
- 9.1.3 A review of the supply of employment floorspace included detailed assessments of each employment area above 0.25ha, in accordance with PPG (ECO2b). It also considered the overall mix of employment floorspace between the B class uses, the differing age of premises and vacancy levels, together with trends in the rates of completions and losses of employment floorspace. Consideration was also given to future potential floorspace in adjoining local authority areas.
- 9.1.4 In Hart district, 24 employment sites were assessed against a wide range of factors including accessibility, facilities, quantity of non-B Class uses, the development context and vacancies.
- 9.1.5 The supply of employment space in the development pipeline included development plan allocations and existing permissions but excluded sites from unimplemented planning permissions in local plan allocations to ensure no double counting.
- 9.1.6 The labour demand requirements for B class employment space used three widely used methods for estimating future employment space need:-
- I. Labour demand projections based on projections of employment growth from three economic forecasting houses (Experian, Oxford Economics and Cambridge Econometrics)
 - II. Considering the past trends in employment floorspace completions
 - III. Estimates of the future growth of labour supply
- 9.1.7 Sensitivity testing was undertaken to examine each scenario against other factors, for example, historic rates of growth and employment land re-use and the sensitivity of each scenario to different assumptions. The two different scenarios for future employment space requirements - based on forecast levels of employment growth in the SHMA and past

development trends - gave a range of need in the FEA of between 47 and 49 ha of employment land.

- 9.1.8 A review of the commercial market in the FEA distinguished between the different property markets within the FEA. It noted the two distinct tiers in the office market, namely modern grade A offices in business park locations and lower grade office accommodation. The ELR explored the differences in demand and cost of each level of accommodation, with the oversupply of poorer quality stock leading to lower values and limiting investment in its refurbishment. The ELR noted that Permitted Development Rights enabling conversion of offices to residential have reduced the amount of lower quality town centre office floorspace and office vacancy levels. In relation to Hart, Ancells Business Park at Fleet and Bartley Wood Business Park, Hook were identified as having a number of office to residential prior approvals permitted.
- 9.1.9 The ELR concludes that there is sufficient floorspace for office use in the FEA but that industrial land is tight. Its conclusions took account of both quantitative and qualitative factors and the findings are reflected in the approach taken in Policies ED1, ED2 and ED3.
- 9.1.10 The ELR distinguishes between Strategic and Locally Important Employment Sites in the draft Local Plan and underpins the development of a policy approach which offers a high level of protection against losses to non-B class uses on the Strategic Employment Sites, with a more proportionate, though still protective approach, taken on Locally Important Employment Sites. The site survey evidence in the ELR (ECO2b) has enabled the policy approach to distinguish appropriately between site designations for Strategic and Locally Important Employment Sites.
- 9.1.11 The Council believes the quantitative and qualitative need for employment land has been comprehensively examined within the ELR and provides a sound basis to support the local plan employment policies.

9.2 What is the current status of the Article 4 Direction consultation that the Council has referred to? Is reference to it within the Plan justified?

- 9.2.1 The “non-immediate” Article 4 direction will aim to withdraw permitted development rights for change of use of offices, light industrial units and storage & distribution units, to residential use. This will apply to all 19 Strategic and Locally Important Employment Sites identified in the Submitted Hart Local Plan. Notice of the making of the Article 4 was undertaken for a 6 week period from Friday 4th May – Friday 15th June 2018. All representations were considered in the form of a report and appendix and it was agreed to confirm the Article 4. Notification of this confirmation was undertaken for a 6 week period from Friday 31st August – Friday 12th October 2018. The Article 4 direction will come in to force on Monday 6 May 2019.
- 9.2.2 Objective 6 of the local plan states “*To support economic growth by protecting and providing a range of size and types of employment land and buildings...*” This is reflected in paragraph 216 under “Safeguarding Employment” which aims to protect a portfolio of employment land, and paragraph 217 refers to the Strategic and Locally Important Employment Sites as being the focus for the subsequent Policy ED1 “Safeguarding Employment Land and Premises (B-Use Classes)”. More specifically, paragraph 218 acknowledges that a number of premises within defined employment sites have been subject to changes of use from office to

residential use under “permitted development rights” and in order to support the protection of employment sites, the Council will explore additional measures to provide protection for these sites. One such measure which has now been instigated and confirmed is the Article 4 Direction outlined above in paragraph 9.2.1. Reference to “Article 4 Direction” is not currently mentioned in a local plan policy or any supporting text, but there is reference to the context for safeguarding employment sites. It is therefore appropriate to acknowledge confirmation of the Article 4 and its coming in to force in May 2019, and it would be justified to add the following text at the end of paragraph 218 “...the Council will explore additional measures to provide protection for the designated sites, **such as the introduction of an Article 4 Direction.**” (Mod No. 45a)

- 9.2.3 The Topic Paper: Employment (TOP4), paragraph 24 acknowledges that a number of residential prior approvals have been permitted at Ancells Business Park and paragraph 32 refers to the Employment Land Review 2016 (ECO2a and ECO2b) conclusion that established employment sites continue to be protected. Paragraph 45 refers to the Council having begun the process of placing an Article 4 Direction on the various employment sites, and the minor modification referred to in paragraph 9.2.2 above would be consistent with this comment.

Policy ED I

9.3 Is Policy ED I positively prepared and are each of its criteria justified?

- 9.3.1 The allocation and protection of employment land and premises in the Borough supports the objectives of the Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan (ECO6), which seek to develop key sectors and increase the amount of jobs and businesses by 2020. Aligned to this, a strategic objective in the Submitted Local Plan (CDI) seeks to support economic growth by protecting and providing a range of size and types of employment land and buildings, including those supporting the rural economy.
- 9.3.2 The ELR concludes that the land supply through Local Plan allocations not yet built and unimplemented planning permissions, equates to 54.4ha. Employment land requirements in the FEA are estimated in the ELR to be between 47 and 49.2 ha. Therefore, the ELR concludes there is sufficient land to meet the forecast growth needs of the office sector until 2032, though the land supply for industrial uses is very tight.
- 9.3.3 Policy ED I seeks to ensure sufficient opportunities for meeting future employment needs through safeguarding Strategic and Locally Important Employment Sites, providing opportunities on suitable previously developed land and within the countryside where it complies with other Plan policies and demonstrates a need for development in that location. This is consistent with the ELR (paras 8.33 and 8.34) which identifies a need to protect established industrial sites, encourage the redevelopment or regeneration of these sites and provide a positive policy framework for rural enterprise and diversification.
- 9.3.4 Many of the employment sites assessed in the ELR (ECO2b) are proposed to be allocated in the Plan in order to support existing business sectors and to provide some flexibility for industrial needs over the plan period. The Plan is therefore positively prepared in protecting and promoting employment land to meet future needs.

- 9.3.5 Sites under 0.25 ha have not been assessed in the ELR and therefore provide an element of additional potential for small scale employment use over the Plan period through redevelopment where appropriate. In the longer term, the new settlement at Murrell Green/Winchfield will provide additional land allocations for mixed employment uses.
- 9.3.6 Policy ED1 has been positively prepared as it makes sufficient provision to meet predicted employment needs over the Plan period.

Policy Criteria

- 9.3.7 Strategic and Locally Important Employment Sites are protected in policy ED1 under criteria a) and b). This is consistent with the conclusions of the ELR.
- 9.3.8 Policy ED1 c) allows for the redevelopment of previously developed sites both in the urban and rural areas. This is consistent with the recommendations in the ELR in para 10.31 to enable renewal of existing office stock and redevelopment of existing industrial stock.
- 9.3.9 Policy ED1 d) allows for employment development in the countryside where consistent with Policies NBE1 and ED3 or demonstrates an overriding need for the development to be at that location. The ELR (para 8.34) supports the provision of a positive policy framework for rural enterprise and diversification. The Council considers that these policies taken together provide for appropriate economic growth in rural areas consistent with para 28 in the NPPF.
- 9.3.10 However, on reflection, the Council recognises that criterion d) of Policy ED1 may not provide enough flexibility in the cases where there is a demonstrated need and is consistent with other Plan policies. Therefore, the Council proposes to amend criterion d) in Policy ED1 to read:

“d) within the countryside provided they comply with Policies NBE1 and ED3 or otherwise demonstrate an overriding need for development at that location and the proposal complies with other plan policies.” (See Matter 9.4 below (FPM43b)).

9.4 Is criterion d) justified, insofar, that it requires an ‘overriding’ need to be demonstrated?

- 9.4.1 Policy ED1 d) allows for employment development in the countryside where consistent with Policies NBE1 and ED3 or demonstrates an overriding need for the development to be at that location. The Council considers that these policies taken together, provide for appropriate economic growth in rural areas consistent with para 28 in the NPPF.
- 9.4.2 On reflection, in response to representations, the Council recognises that criterion d) of Policy ED1 may not provide enough flexibility in the cases where there is a demonstrated need and is consistent with other Plan policies. It may be demonstrated that there is a qualitative need and where this is consistent with other plan policies it may be reasonable to provide some further flexibility.
- 9.4.3 Therefore, the Council is suggesting a further proposed modification to amend criterion d) in Policy ED1: “d) within the countryside provided they comply with Policies NBE1 and ED3 or otherwise demonstrate an overriding need for development at that location and the proposal complies with other plan policies. (FPM43b)

9.5 To be effective, should Policy ED1 at criteria a) refer to the Policies Map?

- 9.5.1 The Council considers that to improve clarity and ensure the Plan's deliverability over its time period, it would be helpful to add a reference to the Policies Map to criteria a).
- 9.5.2 Therefore, the Council is suggesting a further proposed modification to amend criterion a) in Policy ED1: "a) within Strategic or Locally Important Employment Areas defined on the Policies Map. (FPM43a)

Policy ED2

9.6 Is the approach of Policy ED2 to safeguarding Strategic Employment Sites justified and consistent with national policy? Further, should there be an element of flexibility?

- 9.6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012), paragraph 21 supports giving a clear economic vision and strategy to positively encourage sustainable economic growth and setting criteria or identifying strategic sites for local and inward investment to match the strategy and meet anticipated needs over the Plan period. However, paragraph 22 cautions that; "Planning policies should avoid the long-term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities."
- 9.6.2 Overall, the ELR concludes that there is a sufficient supply of land to meet the forecast growth needs of the office sector until 2032, though the land supply for industrial uses is very tight. It supports protecting industrial land allocations, prominent business park locations and well performing rural employment sites. The ELR notes the majority of industrial sites should be retained to support existing business sectors and to provide flexibility for industrial needs.
- 9.6.3 The Local Plan (CD1) identifies six Strategic Employment Sites and thirteen Locally Important Employment Sites. The risks of allocating fewer employment sites include:
- Undermining the Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan aspirations;
 - The loss of remaining development land in high demand locations;
 - The lack of certainty that provision of the same quality and type would be replaced elsewhere in the FEA;
 - Reducing sites which are currently fulfilling a strategic or local need, which in turn could displace established businesses.
- 9.6.4 The joint ELR 2016 (ECO2a) tests future economic growth across the Functional Economic Area (FEA) and seeks to match this with the future supply of employment land and premises. Its recommendations focus on understanding the function that each employment site plays in the supply of sites for such uses, and whether this role is of a strategic or locally important nature. Strategic sites are identified as those considered to fulfil a strategic function and have the greatest alignment to the Enterprise M3 priority sectors or support the FEA's core

sectors such as business services and industrial and distribution sectors. Locally important employment sites are those having an important role to play in servicing the local economy.

- 9.6.5 The Submitted Local Plan (CDI) policies offer the highest protection against loss to non-B class uses on the Strategic Employment Sites (SES), whilst providing a more flexible approach to Locally Important Employment Sites, where justified. The ELR concludes strategic sites have a significant role in meeting future employment needs and comments on each site highlight why the site is protected.

Strategic Employment Site	ELR concluding comments
Bartley Wood	Relatively modern employment site providing a range of Grade A office units in a highly prominent location that has excellent transport links by both road and rail. Site is well managed, landscaped and relatively well occupied. Notes planning consent for conversion to residential.
Bartley Point	Provides modern quality floorspace to meet industrial needs in a managed site. Proximity to the M3 is a key benefit. Only 1 unit available demonstrating there is demand for this type of accommodation.
Cody Technology Park	Site is part developed. New development recently completed and further development underway. Relatively isolated location, lacking prominence but secure and good accessibility.
Meadows Business Park	Modern grade A office units in a relatively sustainable location with good access by road and rail. Its flexibility in enabling multiple occupations meets the needs of the market with high occupancy rates. Prominent location with range of facilities. Set in high quality landscape.
Osborne Way	Low vacancy rates. Comprises three sub sites which are all performing well. Highly accessible by a range of modes and proximity to the M3. Provides a mix of accommodation types and sizes.
Waterfront Business Park	Relatively modern site providing quality Grade A offices and industrial units. Well managed and a prominent location in Fleet next to the rail station. Fully let and a number of units have been refurbished recently. Sustainable location with excellent public transport access.

- 9.6.6 Overall, the ELR therefore concludes that these sites provide high quality, high occupancy office and industrial development, which are attractive to businesses and companies. These sites within Hart are considered to fulfil a strategic function, have the greatest alignment to the Enterprise M3 priority sectors and support/could support core services in the FEA. In establishing the boundaries of the strategic employment sites, account has been taken of National Policy and Guidance, the Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan, the ELR and losses of employment use through Prior Approval. Given Strategic sites represent the best quality employment sites in the district, the only flexibility is for small scale changes of use or redevelopment for non-B classes where it provides a complementary use. It is considered

that the draft Local Plan policy approach strikes the right balance between protecting and providing strategic employment sites to meet future needs.

- 9.6.7 The Policy is considered justified and accords with national policy outlined in paragraphs 19, 21 and 22 of the NPPF.

9.7 Is the approach of Policy ED2 to safeguarding Local Employment Sites justified and consistent with national policy?

- 9.7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) sets out at paragraph 22 that; “Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.”
- 9.7.2 The ELR (2016) concludes that across the FEA, the balance between the supply of office and industrial space and forecast requirements to 2032 is tight. The ELR, together with evidence from the Enterprise M3 LEP, therefore provides justification for the identification of six Strategic Employment Sites and thirteen Locally Important Employment Sites in the Local Plan.
- 9.7.3 The risks of an alternative approach to employment land allocation in the Borough, such as deallocating more employment land, include:
- Undermining the Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan aspirations;
 - The loss of remaining development land with consent in high demand locations (supply is predominantly clustered around Farnborough Airport);
 - The lack of certainty that provision of the same quality and type would be replaced elsewhere in the FEA;
 - The de-allocation of employment sites that are currently fulfilling a strategic or local need, which in turn could displace established businesses.
- 9.7.4 Locally Important Employment Sites play an important role in providing land for the more local economy and can include ‘bad neighbour’ activities. The ELR identifies a reasonably tight industrial land supply.
- 9.7.5 To enhance the supply of vacant land and premises for industrial uses, the Hart Submitted Plan (CDI) includes a larger site at the Locally Important Employment Site at Eversley Storage than was considered in the ELR, to provide for the expansion of the existing occupier.
- 9.7.6 In recognition of the less strategic role these sites play in achieving local economic objectives, some flexibility is added to Policy ED2. This includes where there are no strong economic reasons to keep the site in employment use and where market signals show it is not likely to be used for employment or where it is similar in character to B class employment or it is not appropriate to continue the employment use for environmental or amenity reasons. The approach in Policy ED2 is considered to balance the need to maintain a supply of employment floorspace and not to keep sites allocated for employment use where there is no prospect to them being used for this purpose.

9.7.7 The Policy is considered justified and accords with national policy outlined in paragraphs 17, 109 and 113 of the NPPF.

9.8 Are criteria a) to d) in Policy ED2 justified and consistent with national policy?

- 9.8.1 The ELR (ECO2a) identifies a broad range of employment sites of differing qualities and types within the FEA. The employment needs over the Plan period can be met from the existing supply of land allocations and extant permissions but without there being a significant surplus of employment land. Industrial land supply in particular is tight. Criteria a) is therefore justified to secure economic growth.
- 9.8.2 Criteria b), c) and d) are consistent with NPPF, para 22 and necessary to ensure any loss of employment land in Locally Important Employment Sites takes account of the demand for the site for employment purposes; the proposed use is compatible with adjoining B class employment uses or that the employment use is not compatible with the amenity or environment of the surrounding area or the adjoining uses. The criteria are therefore important to ensure the site is not lost from employment use unless justified.
- 9.8.3 Locally Important Employment Sites play an important role in providing land for the more local economy and can include `bad neighbour` activities. In recognition of the less strategic role these sites play in achieving local economic objectives, some flexibility is included in Policy ED2 where it meets the policy criteria. The Council consider the approach balances the need to maintain a supply of employment floorspace and not maintain an employment site allocation where there is no prospect of it being used for this purpose.
- 9.8.4 The Policy is therefore considered justified and accords with national policy outlined in paragraph 22 of the NPPF.

9.9 Is each employment site and its boundary set out within Policy ED2 justified and based on robust evidence?

- 9.9.1 The ELR (ECO2a) undertook employment site assessments for each of the established employment sites above 0.25 Ha within Hart district. The sites were identified by the Council and inspected and assessed by planning officers. The boundaries of the sites have been reviewed to exclude areas with prior consent for residential development in accordance with para 22 in the NPPF which seeks to avoid long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where “there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose”. EXAM 35, 36, 41 show minor corrections of the boundaries to Blackbushe Business Park, Eversley Storage and Optrex Business Park Locally Important Employment Sites.
- 9.9.2 The boundary at the Eversley Storage Locally Important Employment Area reflects its role in the rural economy, the difficulty in finding locations for valuable bad neighbour uses such as storage and the importance of rural business space in providing a proportion of the FEA’s employment requirements. The site boundary is wider than that included in the ELR (ECO2b) to recognise the expansion plans of the site’s occupier and to contribute to the tight land supply for industrial use. The boundary at Beacon Hill Road Locally Important Employment Area is larger than the boundary shown in the ELR in recognition of the

outstanding planning consent for BI/2/8 and the recent amended plan, flood risk and design and access statement submitted.

- 9.9.3 The Council considers that the boundary for each employment site and the inclusion of the strategic and locally important employment sites in the Plan reflect the evidence in the ELR, officer assessment and the policy context set by the NPPF, the vision and objectives of the Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan (ECO6) and the Hart Economic Development Strategy (ECO4a).

9.10 To be effective, should Policy ED2 refer to the Policies Map?

- 9.10.1 The Council considers that to improve clarity and ensure the Plan's deliverability over its period, it would be helpful to add a reference to the Policies Map to cross refer to the strategic and locally important employment sites. Therefore, the Council proposes a modification to address this issue, to add the following text to the end of Policy ED2:

“Strategic and Locally Important Employment Areas are defined on the Policies Map.” (FPM45a)

9.11 Is a 6 month marketing period set out within Paragraph 224 justified?

- 9.11.1 Employment premises require a period of marketing to identify a potential occupier. The length of period required to let a property depends upon different factors including the state of the commercial market, the type of unit, floorspace cost, competing sites and costs and customer requirements. A period of at least 6 months is considered a reasonable timescale over which to ascertain whether there is interest from potential occupiers. For larger premises a longer period may be required.

9.12 Are Paragraphs 226 and 227 setting out Policy? Should they be incorporated into Policy ED2?

- 9.12.1 In response to representations, the Council recognises that paragraphs 226 and 227 set out policy may be more helpful to include in Policy ED2. Therefore, the Council proposes a further proposed modification to add the following text to the end of Policy ED2:

“The regeneration and intensification of other employment sites will be supported where it replaces buildings which have reached the end of their functional economic life.” (FPM45b)

Policy ED3

9.13 Is Policy ED3 and each of its criteria justified and consistent with national policy?

- 9.13.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012), paragraph 17 seeks to promote thriving rural communities whilst recognising “the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”. Paragraph 28 sets out the principles to support a strong rural economy including sustainable growth and expansion in rural areas, through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; development and diversification of agricultural and land based rural

businesses; sustainable rural tourism and leisure development and the retention of local services and community facilities.

- 9.13.2 The ELR (ECO2a) identifies the importance of the rural area in Hart and increasing diversification within the agricultural sector (para 8.34). Paragraph 10.11 identifies the need to enable the intensification, upgrading and refurbishment of employment sites for more efficient use or to better meet the needs of the economy. It identifies the importance of encouraging rural diversification and support for SMEs and the wider rural economy.
- 9.13.3 Policy ED3 is considered by the Council to reflect the NPPF, the evidence in the ELR, the Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan (ECO6) and the Hart Economic Development Strategy (ECO4a).
- 9.13.4 Criteria a) and b) seek to encourage changes of use, conversions or replacement buildings or new small-scale buildings or extensions. This approach reflects para 28 in the NPPF. The focus of new buildings to be located in or on the edge of an existing settlement reflects paragraph 17 which seeks to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it.
- 9.13.5 Criteria c) and d) support farm diversification and support rural enterprises which is consistent with the conclusions in the ELR and the NPPF.
- 9.13.6 Criteria e) seeks justification to be provided for new buildings and the scale of proposed development. This seeks to balance the need for development in the rural area and supporting thriving rural communities with recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The ELR supports the role of the countryside in providing for SMEs but does not suggest that this should be other than small scale.
- 9.13.7 Para 231 following Policy ED3 makes clear that the policy includes consideration of rural tourism and leisure activities in addition to B class employment uses.
- 9.13.8 Criteria l) –iv) seek to ensure that the impact of proposals is balanced against elements which are protected in the NPPF, paragraphs 17, 109 and 126. These are justified in that they provide protection against inappropriate scale or location of economic development in the countryside.
- 9.13.9 The Policy is considered to accord with national policy outlined in paragraphs 17 and 28 of the NPPF as well as in the NPPG.

9.14 Is the wording of Policy ED3, particularly the use of ‘or’ after some of the criteria, effective? Are some of the criteria meant to be read in combination?

- 9.14.1 Policy ED3 encourages employment development in the rural area to support the rural economy. It applies to Business, General industrial and Storage and Distribution (Classes B1, B2 and B8) proposals and also other rural economic development including rural tourism and leisure. The Council considers that Policy ED3 provides for appropriate economic growth in rural areas, consistent with para 28 in the NPPF.
- 9.14.2 On reflection, the Council recognises that some of the criteria should be read in combination rather than individually and that it may not be clear what is appropriate economic development in the rural area.

- 9.14.3 Therefore, the Council is suggesting a further proposed modification to amend criterion b) and d) in Policy ED3: by removing “or” at the end of these criteria (FPM45c).
- 9.14.4 The amended policy ED3 will clearly set out the circumstances where economic development will be supported in the rural area. This provides a framework for proposals arising in the rural area to enable appropriate economic growth to come forward as proposed in the ELR. (ECO2a)